

GAME FACE

INDIANAPOLIS SPORTSMAN MAGAZINE

**Manny
Ramirez**

**Simply
THE BEST**

Photo: Gregory Drezdon

2.50

SEPTEMBER 1999 GF (RAMIREZ)



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**JACOBS FIELD ERA
CHAMPS**



Photo: Gregory Drezdson



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THE GAME SAVER

BY STEVE HERRICK



Photo: Gregory Drezdron

Mike Jackson's Major League debut is still the topic of conversation in the Indians clubhouse from time to time.

It's no surprise that details of August 22, 1986 are still fresh in Jackson's mind. All players remember their first game in the big leagues for the rest of their lives. However, memories of that day are shared by another Indians player.

Jackson's debut came with the Philadelphia Phillies, the team that drafted him in 1984 and

called him up two weeks before his debut. The Phils were playing the New York Mets, who would go on to win the World Series that season. Jackson, who was 22 years old at the time, was called on to relieve in the game. The first hitter he faced was **Ray Knight**, and Jackson retired him. He also retired **Rafael Santana**, the next hitter he faced.

Then up came **Dwight Gooden**, the Mets' star pitcher at the time. Jackson won the battle, but he's been hearing about it ever since.

"Doc almost took me deep," says Jackson. "(Philadelphia's left fielder) **Milt Thompson** jumped

over the wall and brought the ball back in."

Thirteen years later, the two pitchers are teammates. Jackson says Gooden reminds him of the near-homer frequently. Gooden, who laughs at the mere mention of the encounter, gladly confirms that fact.

"I talk to him all the time about it," he says. "When I first hit it, I thought it was out. I always kid him about it."

Gooden also remembers the next time he faced Jackson, which came a couple of years later.

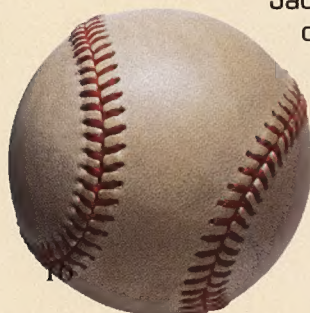
"The first time I faced him he was a rookie, it was his first game in the big leagues and he was up there shaking," says Gooden. "The next time I faced him, he had his hat pulled down over his eyes and he was throwing three-quarters (in his delivery). I said, 'I don't want any part of this guy.'"

"I get an adrenaline rush when the game is on the line."

— Mike Jackson

Gooden isn't the last player to think that of Jackson, who has been one of the most reliable relief pitchers in baseball since the late 1980s.

Jackson, who is in his 13th year in the big leagues, is having another fine season as the Tribe's closer. He has been a key member of the Indians bullpen since signing with the team on December 13, 1996.



Twelve straight years in the bullpen has helped Jackson develop the hard-nosed attitude all good relievers must have.

"I get an adrenaline rush when the game is on the line," he says. "It's a battle against the hitter. That's one thing I enjoy. I still have that feeling when the game is on the line."

Jackson was 2-5 with 15 saves and a 3.24 ERA in 1997. In his first full season as a closer in 1998, he saved 40 of 45

chances, had a 1.55 ERA and hitters batted .195 against him. Jackson finished third in the Rollins Relief Man standings behind Boston's **Tom Gordon** and Texas' **John Wetteland**.

Jackson, who recorded his 100th career save on April 11, saved all

Diaz congratulates Jackson after one of more than 30 saves this season.

three wins in the Division Series against Boston last season. He has allowed three runs in 18-1/3 innings in the Post Season the last two years.

Individual numbers are nice, but Jackson, now 34, has other things on his mind.

"I don't think about it that much," he says. "I guess when my career is over, I'll look back on it, but those are just personal things. This is a team sport and I focus on team goals."

"Mike brings a lot to the table," says Indians general manager **John Hart**. "He's brave and he's a fierce competitor."

Jackson has been involved in sports most of his life. He played baseball and football at Forest Brook High School in Houston. While playing quarterback for the football team in his senior year, he injured his knee. He pitched and played shortstop for the baseball team, but hurt his knee again and had to have surgery. Jackson was the Phillies' 28th round pick in the June Draft in 1983, but didn't sign. The Phillies maintained their interest and picked Jackson again in the second round of the January Draft in 1984. Jackson had signed to play football at the University of Kansas, but the school didn't want him to play baseball so that idea was shelved.

Jackson, who was attending Hill Junior College in Texas, signed with the Phillies. He was drafted as a pitcher/outfielder, but was told by the Phillies the quickest way to get to the big leagues was as a pitcher. His days as a position player were over.

Jackson went 7-2 with a 2.68 ERA at Class A Spartanburg, South Carolina in his first season of pro ball. All 14 of his appearances were as a starter.

Jackson was promoted to Class A Peninsula, Virginia the next season. He began the season in the rotation and was 7-0 at one point.



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

Jackson pitched with the Giants from 1992-94 before signing with Cincinnati in 1995. He then signed again with the Mariners for the 1996 season before signing with the Indians.

Jackson is more than just a pitcher. He's an athlete who gets involved with the community. Jackson spoke at the *Cuyahoga*

"He told them you're going to fail, but the real failure is if you give up."

— Indians community relations director, Allen Davis, regarding Jackson's message to young offenders

Jackson pitched at the *Juvenile Detention Center* in downtown Cleveland on July 30. The pitcher talked to 175 youths between the ages of 11 and 18. The visit meant a lot to Jackson, who worked as a prison guard in Texas between the 1985 and 1986 seasons.

"They had called and wanted somebody to give them a positive message, a message of hope," says Indians community relations director Allen Davis. "I knew Mike had worked as a prison guard. Knowing Mike's values and the fact that he's a Christian, I thought this would be a good fit for him."

"It was fun," says Jackson. "Kids who seem to get in trouble sometimes think people just don't want to be bothered with them. I'm not making excuses for the kids. They chose to go down this path, but they still have the opportunity to make the right decision. We have the opportunity to have an impact on young kids' lives. That means more than anything else."

"When I asked him about this, he said fine," says Davis. "It was really

gratifying he said yes right away. He did a great job. He talked about 35 or 40 minutes and then took some questions. As each kid walked out, Mike shook their hand. A couple of kids hugged him."

Jackson wanted to give the kids something positive to hold on to.

"I tried to encourage the kids that just because they made a mistake it doesn't mean their life is over," he says. "I told them it's a matter of making good choices. If they're willing to make changes, they can change their life. I tried to give them a little light."

"He did a tremendous job," says Davis. "These kids are hard to sell. Mike was very sincere. He spoke

age them. That's what I was trying to do."

Jackson signed some baseball cards for the kids and challenged them to straighten out their lives upon their release. If they're successful in the next year, he's promised them tickets to a game at Jacobs Field next season. He made that vow, knowing he's a free agent at the end of the season and might be pitching somewhere else in 2000.

"Mike told me he wants to do this, even if he isn't here next season," says Davis. "I thought that was a very noble gesture on his part."

Davis said Jackson brought up a game in New York when he failed



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

from the heart. These kids are street smart. They'll spot a phony right away, but they really listened."

"My main message was to let them know the rest of the world might give up on them, but some people still care about them," says Jackson. "Once they go in there they don't have anyone to encour-

to hold a 10th inning lead in July. "Mike told them they're not always going to have success," says Davis. "He told them you're going to fail, but the real failure is if you give up. He did a good job of tying it into a real-life situation."

Jackson talked to the kids about another real-life situation, his

Minor Leagues

continued from page 68

a game somewhere in Virginia," said Assenmacher. "On our way, we passed the ballpark at Richmond, which was Triple-A. And I remember thinking to myself, 'Boy, if I could just make it up to Triple-A, that would really be something.'"

Reed said there is nothing more humbling than to enter professional baseball as an undrafted free agent. "My first year was at Pocatello, Idaho, and the thing I remember most about Pocatello

low," said Reed. "But when the draft goes 88 rounds and you don't get drafted, you'll take any opportunity you can to continue playing baseball, so that's what I did."

Reed realized early that as a non-drafted free agent he would have to open eyes quickly. "I always felt I had to do more than the drafted guys, just so they would keep me around," said Reed. "One thing that does, though, is it builds character. I mean, you never let up."

Graham said Minor League players also learn some harsh baseball

"The biggest thing I learned from being in the Minor Leagues was how to deal with failure," said Shuey. "Getting my rear end handed to me in Double-A, you don't like it, but it prepares you for the big leagues. Now whenever I get kicked around up here, I say to myself, 'I've been here.' I think one of the things that can burn you bad is if you don't know what it is like to get beat up. You learn that in the Minor Leagues."

Although if it happens too often, you are no longer in the Minor Leagues.

"Getting released is the worst, because sometimes it happens to your friends, and there is nothing you can say to them to make them feel better," said Reed. "Most of them have played baseball their whole lives, and now it's taken away from them. And everyone knows what day it happens. The day they release players is the day of the week when they hand out the meal money. They release you before that so they don't have to give you meal money."

Shuey said sometimes the whims of fate are hard to figure out. "There was a guy I played with in the Minors, a pitcher named Alan Walden," Shuey said. "He was something like a 35th round pick, but he was throwing 92-93 (mph), just like me. Doing the same thing, really, as me. Maybe not as refined. But the arm was there. He got hit around some, but on pure stuff, if he had been a high round draft pick I'm sure they would have kept him around longer. But they didn't. He got released."

Graham managed for nine years in the Minor Leagues, and he says telling a player he is being released is never easy. "It's heartbreaking," he said. "The hundredth time you do it is just as hard as the first



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

Reliever Steve Reed was another undrafted Minor Leaguer who made it to the Majors.

was getting out of Pocatello," Reed said. "That, and the long bus rides. Our longest was a 12-hour trip to Medicine Hat."

That's a city in Canada.

Imagine riding a bus for 12 hours, and when you get off it, you're in Medicine Hat.

"I went to college for four years, and to go through something like that — that was the lowest of the

realities. "It makes you a good self-evaluator," he said. "You show up that first year with a lot of confidence in your ability. Then you see there are players with more talent than you, and that can shake your confidence. But even then you don't realize the odds are against you. Even in the low Minors, everyone thinks they have a chance to make it. The dividing line is Double-A. If you can make it that far, then you know you really do have a chance, because from Double-A it's only one more step after that, and then the big leagues."

If nothing else, the Minor Leagues builds men. Even those players who were high draft picks and high profile guys admit that.

Jacobs Field Ground Rules

Baseball's most important pitch this season won't come from a mound. In an effort to combat drinking and driving, Major League Baseball, together with the Techniques for Effective Alcohol Management (TEAM) coalition, continues to make a comprehensive appeal to fans this year. The message: **PLEASE DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!**

As part of the TEAM program, each Major League club reviews its alcohol policies and runs public service announcements asking fans to drink responsibly and warns them against the consequences of drinking and driving.

The Cleveland Indians want you safe, because we want you back. Please drink responsibly.

In an effort to make everyone's visit to the Ballpark as safe and enjoyable as possible, a list of guidelines has been developed.

The Indians ask that you follow these guidelines, or be subject to ejection from the Ballpark, and in some cases, subject to criminal prosecution by the Cleveland Police Department.

To ensure that each game is a pleasant experience for each and every guest, the Indians have established the following **"Ground Rules:"**

"It is our intention to make our home a safe, comfortable, family-oriented facility so every trip to Jacobs Field is most enjoyable."

**— Dennis Lehman,
Indians Executive Vice
President of Business**

- Jacobs Field is a non-smoking facility with designated smoking areas. Non-smoking areas include: the entire seating bowl of the Ballpark (including the outdoor seating of Suites and Club Seats); KidsLand; and all public rest rooms. Smoking is permitted in the following areas: Back Yard; Patio area on the Main Concourse; all three concourse levels (Main, Mezzanine, and Upper Deck) on the East Ninth Street side of the Ballpark and Upper Deck pavilion area on the Carnegie side of the Ballpark (all of these locations are open-air areas with picnic tables, concession stands, and rest room facilities nearby); Bleacher Concourse on the Eagle Avenue side of the Ballpark. In addition, the Terrace Club and Club Lounge have both smoking and non-

or carry obscene, political, or commercial messages. Banners may be hung from the facing of the Upper Deck. Poles and sticks are strictly prohibited.

- Fans may bring small umbrellas into Jacobs Field as long as they do not interfere with other fans' enjoyment of the game. Large golf umbrellas are discouraged.
- Cameras and video recorders are permitted. However, any resale of the photography or video is strictly prohibited. Team name, logos, and players' likenesses are all copyrighted material.
- Persons observed breaking the law (eg. using illegal drugs, or drinking alcohol underage) will be subject to immediate ejection and/or criminal prosecution.



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

smoking areas. Jacobs Field has signage identifying designated smoking areas for your convenience.

- Cans, glass bottles, plastic beverage containers, thermos bottles, and squeeze bottles are not permitted into Jacobs Field.
- Due to security concerns, hard-sided coolers and containers are not permitted. Soft-sided containers and coolers are permitted.
- Food items and juice boxes are permitted inside the Ballpark, provided they are not inside a hard-sided cooler or container.
- Pets are not allowed inside the Ballpark. However, guide dogs for persons with sight disabilities are permitted.
- The resale (scalping) of Indians tickets is strictly prohibited and subject to prosecution by the Cleveland Police Department.
- Fans are permitted to bring and display banners, provided they do not interfere with the game, obstruct the view of fans,

- Persons using obscene or abusive language, or engaging in any other antisocial conduct offensive to those around them, will be asked by Indians personnel to cease this conduct. If the offensive conduct persists, those involved will be ejected from Jacobs Field.
- Persons entering the playing field, throwing or attempting to throw objects onto the field, will be subject to immediate ejection from Jacobs Field and/or criminal prosecution.

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, or problems, please visit one of the Guest Service Centers located at Section 121 of the Main Concourse and in Section 519 of the Upper Concourse, or see one of our hosts throughout the Ballpark. The Indians thank you for your cooperation.

The STRONG *Silent* Type

by Jim Ingraham

The first thing you need to know is that he doesn't like to talk about himself. He doesn't like to talk about himself, or anything else, for that matter. Not publicly, anyway. Nothing personal. He just doesn't.

Manny Ramirez speaks for publication about as often as he takes a bad swing at home plate.

So if that's what you're waiting for, forget it. Not gonna happen. Manny Ramirez, the Indians' silent swinger, rarely looks bad at home plate, and Manny Ramirez rarely talks about himself.

Fortunately, other people will.

Ramirez is a source of wonder to his teammates and coaches. They marvel at the seemingly effortless skills of a player who, with apologies to **Tony Gwynn** and the rest of the Hall of Famers-in-waiting currently active in the Major Leagues, might at this point be the most



Photo: Gregory Drexel

complete hitting machine playing in the big leagues today.

"The thing I don't get," says Tribe pitcher **Dave Burba**, "is the way he can drive the ball the other way, to right field, and hit it out of the park almost at will, and not even look like he's trying to hit a home run. That's scary."

"He's just got a classic swing, and he's had it since high school," says Indians pitcher **Charles Nagy**.

Tribe manager **Mike Hargrove** has spent much of the 1999 season answering "How great is Manny?"

questions from astonished media hordes, who thought the rightfielder's 45-homer, 145-RBI 1998 season was his breakthrough into superstardom . . . until he went even more ballistic this year.

In 1999 Ramirez has been something to behold. He has been an RBI machine, leading the Majors in RBI virtually since day one, while hitting .300 and anchoring the middle of the most feared lineup in the Major Leagues.

To his credit, Hargrove has done his best to offer a wide assortment of variations on his standard answer to the "How great is Manny?" questions. The most basic of those responses runs something along the lines of — and we're paraphrasing here — "he's really great."

When a great player is having a fantastic year, even better than the year before,

which everyone thought was superlative, managers tend to get asked a lot of questions about that player.

Hargrove has had plenty of practice this year in dealing with such questions, and he's pretty much honed his most common and effusive response to one of economic elegance.

"Manny might have the purest swing of any player I've ever seen," says Hargrove.

Indians hitting coach **Charlie Manuel** started playing professional baseball in 1963. Manuel is a student of hitting, and has seen all the great ones in the second half of this century.

So where does Manny fit?

"It used to be," says Manuel, "when we had **Albert (Belle)** here, I thought Albert was one of the best right-handed hitters in the game. But the more I see Manny, the more I think he is the best right-handed hitter in the game. Fundamentally he might be the best right-handed hitter I've ever seen."

When Manuel broke into professional baseball in 1963, Indians pitching coach **Phil Regan** was already in his seventh year in pro ball, his fourth year in the big leagues with Detroit. Later in his career, Regan pitched in the National League with the Dodgers and Cubs.

Ask Regan where Ramirez fits in and the Tribe's 62-year-old pitching coach, who as a pitcher faced **Roberto Clemente** and most of the great hitters in both leagues in the 1960s and 1970s and has coached and/or managed against most of the greatest hitters since then, stops and thinks. For nearly a full minute Regan ponders the question.

While amazing just about everyone in baseball with his hitting, Indians rightfielder Manny Ramirez has said very little. Teammates acknowledge that despite enjoying the camaraderie of fellow players, Ramirez is frequently quiet.



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

Finally, he's finished.

"Manny," says Regan, "has to compare with anyone I've ever seen as a hitter."

Together, Manuel and Regan have spent a combined 79 years in professional baseball, and neither one can think of a hitter they would rank as a better all-around swinger of the bat than Ramirez.

Sure, there may be some prejudice involved, but the fact that the

Ramirez was the New York City Public Schools' High School Player of the Year in 1991 — and the Indians first-round draft pick.

issue can even be fairly discussed is evidence enough that Ramirez this season has elevated himself into the top tier of the game's elite hitters.

"He might be the best hitter I've ever seen," says Hargrove bluntly.

And he's only 27.

Manuel Aristides Ramirez was born in Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. He moved with his family to New York City at a young age, and by the time he was a teenager, he was already gaining a reputation as one of the best schoolboy hitters in the city.

Ramirez attended George Washington High School, which is about a sacrifice fly from Yankee Stadium. Hall of Famer **Rod Carew** also attended George Washington, but by the time Ramirez was a senior, Manny was the man.

Ramirez was an All-City player in 1989, 1990, and 1991. As a senior in 1991 he was named the *New York City Public Schools' High School Player of the Year*.

The Indians scouting director at the time was **Mickey White**, who quietly stalked Ramirez during his senior season. Other teams had questions about the competition Ramirez was facing, plus the fact that he was a high school player, and it's generally more difficult to project if a high school player is going to make it to the Major Leagues than it is to project the chances of an older, college player.

Other organizations had their doubts, but

White was convinced that Ramirez was going to become a big-time player. The Tribe scouting director was ready to jump on Ramirez with the Indians' first pick.

The only problem was that the Tribe had the 13th pick in the first round. White would have to sweat out the first 12 picks. And sweat is exactly what White did.

Sweat is also what the 12 teams ahead of the Indians in that draft do now when they look back at what they did on that fateful day eight years ago:

With the first pick in the draft the Yankees selected high school pitcher **Brien Taylor**, who hurt his shoulder in a brawl and never pitched in the big leagues.

With the second pick the Braves took college outfielder **Mike Kelly**. The Twins had the third pick and they took college first baseman **David McCarty**.

With the fourth pick the Cardinals drafted high school third baseman **Dmitri Young**. At No.5 were the Brewers, who took high school pitcher **Kenny Henderson**, who has never been heard from since.

With the sixth pick, the Astros took college pitcher **John Burke**. With the seventh, the Royals selected college infielder **Joe Vitiello**. At No.8 the Padres took college pitcher **Joey Hamilton**.

Four picks to go. White is still sweating.

The Orioles had the ninth pick and they selected college outfielder **Mark Smith**. Good one, huh?

The Phillies had the 10th pick and chose college pitcher **Tyler Green**.

Two picks to go until White can exhale.

At No.11 were the Mariners, who drafted high school pitcher **Shawn Estes**.

White is now ready to pass out from anxiety as the Cubs, with the



Photo: Gregory Drezdson





Photo: Gregory Drezdson

12th pick of the first round, announce their selection: college outfielder **Doug Glanville**.

Whew!

The Indians then took Ramirez with the 13th pick of the draft, gave him a signing bonus of \$250,000, and the rest is history.

"I played with Manny at Double-A and Triple-A," says **Jim Thome**. "And the thing I remembered most about him back then was that he got better at every level he played."

There are degrees of "getting better" of course, and Ramirez progressed this way: .326 BA,

19 HR, 63 RBI at rookie level Burlington (N.C.) in 1991; .278 BA, 13 HR, 63 RBI at Class A Kinston (N.C.) in 1992, and a combined .333 BA, 31 HR, 115 RBI at Class AA Canton-Akron and Class AAA Charlotte in 1993.

In Spring Training of 1994, Indians officials decided to give the right field job to Ramirez, over veteran **Wayne Kirby**. Ramirez has been the Tribe's rightfielder ever since.

"The first thing I noticed about Manny was how he was able to hit the ball the other way with so much power," says Thome.

Ramirez's opposite-field power is a recurring theme when others are asked what most impresses them about the Tribe's rightfielder.

"When one pitch can beat you, you generally will pitch a hitter away," says Regan.

"But if you pitch Manny away, he will hit the ball out to the opposite field. There aren't many guys who can do that. **Hank Aaron** was one who could. Manny is a guy who drives in runs, hits for power, and hits for a high average. I played with **Al Kaline**, and he was a great hitter who drove in runs like Manny. But I don't think Kaline ever hit 30 home runs. He didn't have Manny's power."

Burba says as a pitcher watching Ramirez hit, what strikes him most is the lack of any readily apparent holes in Manny's swing.

"The majority of hitters you face, you can pitch them away and they are not going to beat you," says

Burba. "You pitch Manny away, and he can still beat you. For me, that's the real eye-opener with him. You see guys try to pitch him away, and he hits the ball with ease over the right field fence."

Manuel says Ramirez's ability to hit for power to the opposite field is the result of what is technically almost a perfect swing.

"You may make him look silly on one pitch. But he'll hit the next one 500 feet."

— Indians pitcher Charles Nagy on Manny Ramirez

"Manny's biggest asset is that he makes sure he gets good balls to hit, and then he goes straight through the ball with his swing, better than anyone I've ever seen," said Manuel. "That's what gives him carry on the balls he hits. If you watch him hit, when his bat comes through the strike zone, he keeps it perfectly straight. That allows him to hit the whole ball and drive straight through it. That's where he gets all that power."

Ramirez also gets good plate coverage with that nearly-perfect swing.

"Fundamentally he might be the best right-handed hitter I've ever seen," says Manuel. "And what makes him so tough to pitch to is that he covers the whole plate. You might get him out a couple of times with a pitch in a certain location, but you better not go back there again or he'll hurt you."

Nagy says he's noticed that as well. "You can't pitch him the same way twice. You may make him look silly on one pitch. But he'll hit the next one 500 feet."

That's a reflection of Manny's ability to adjust. Not just from at-bat to at-bat, but from pitch to pitch.

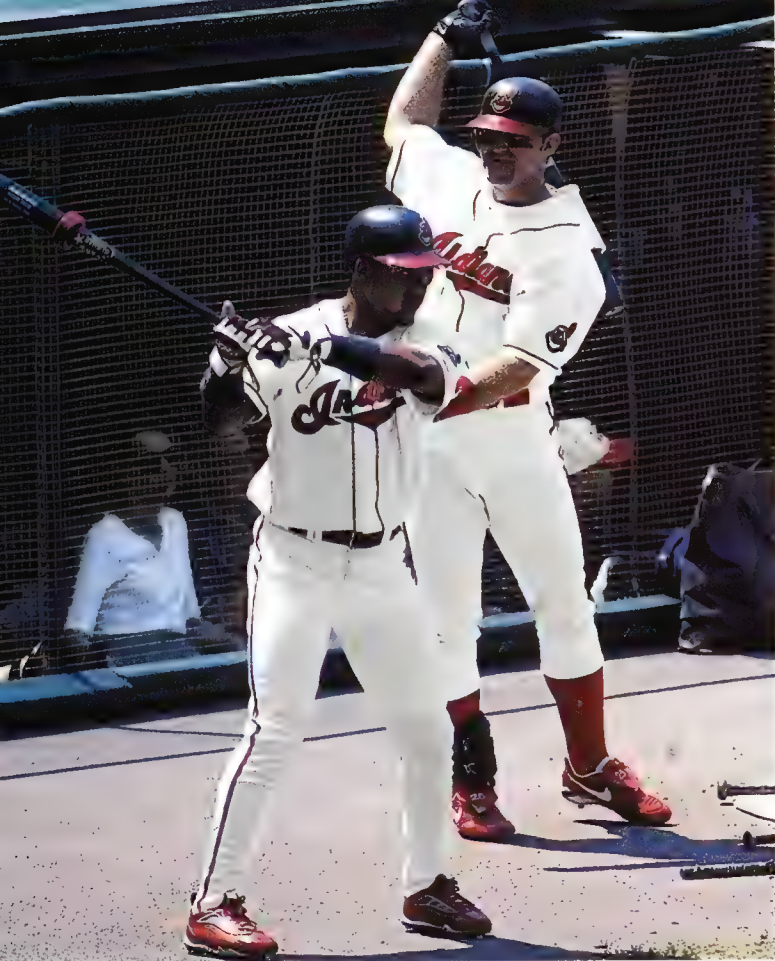


Photo: Gregory Drezdson

"I don't think you'll ever see Manny go through any real bad times because he's so good at making adjustments," says Thome. "He handles the way they are trying to pitch him really well. There just aren't many holes with him. He's got that great balance, and he allows his ability to come through. He never tries to overdo it."

"Sometimes," says Nagy, "you just got to let him hit it and hope he hits it at someone."

Manuel says that Ramirez is more than just a great hitter mechanically. He's also a very intelligent hitter. "It's funny, because Manny is real quiet, but once in a while he'll come back to the dugout after making an out and he'll say to me, 'I'm going to get him,' meaning the pitcher," says Manuel. "And then he'll do it in his next at-bat. Manny concentrates a lot more than people think on hitting and what the pitcher is trying to do to him. You've got to be intelligent to hit the way he hits."

There may, in fact, be no more serious student of hitting in the Indians lineup. Prior to every home

Pictured left: Thome says the first thing he saw in Ramirez was his opposite-field power.



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game, the half dozen TVs in the Tribe's clubhouse feature a video of the last game pitched by the scheduled starter to be faced that night.

Most of the players ignore the tapes. Some watch them casually. Ramirez watches them religiously. He sits in his chair in front of his locker, watching the TV intently. No other player watches the tapes so closely.

"People have no idea how hard Manny works at his hitting," says Regan. "He's always in the cages hitting

"He hits for average and with power to all fields, and there is not one place to pitch him where you can consistently get him out."

—Tribe pitching coach Phil Regan on Manny Ramirez

balls. Sometimes you hear people talking about a guy being a great natural hitter. But it seems like it's always the guys who work the hardest who are called the natural hitters."

And it's Manny's ability to make himself so difficult to pitch to that separates him from most hitters, including some hitters who get far more publicity.

"I don't care who they are; most guys — even guys like Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa — you can pitch them one way, and if you can get the ball into a certain spot you can get them out," says Regan. "But not with Manny. He hits for average and with power to all fields, and there is not one place to pitch him where you can consistently get him out."

And, of course, he's still only 27 — an age at which most players are just starting to enter their peak-performance years.

"Yeah, I think Manny can get even better," says Manuel. "He's gotten better the last few years, because he's been more patient, but also more aggressive. That sounds funny, but good hitters can do that. They are patient enough to get good pitches to hit, but aggressive on balls in the strike zone. He's also a good breaking ball hitter. A lot of guys don't like breaking balls. But Manny will hit them all. The other thing with Manny is that he knows he's a good hitter, and he wants to get better."

Just don't ask him to talk about it.

"He doesn't say much," says Nagy. "It's amazing. You rarely see him get upset. Manny goes about his business, but he's very quiet. He might talk to a guy in a slump and try to cheer him up. But that's about it. I guess you'd call him more of a quiet leader."

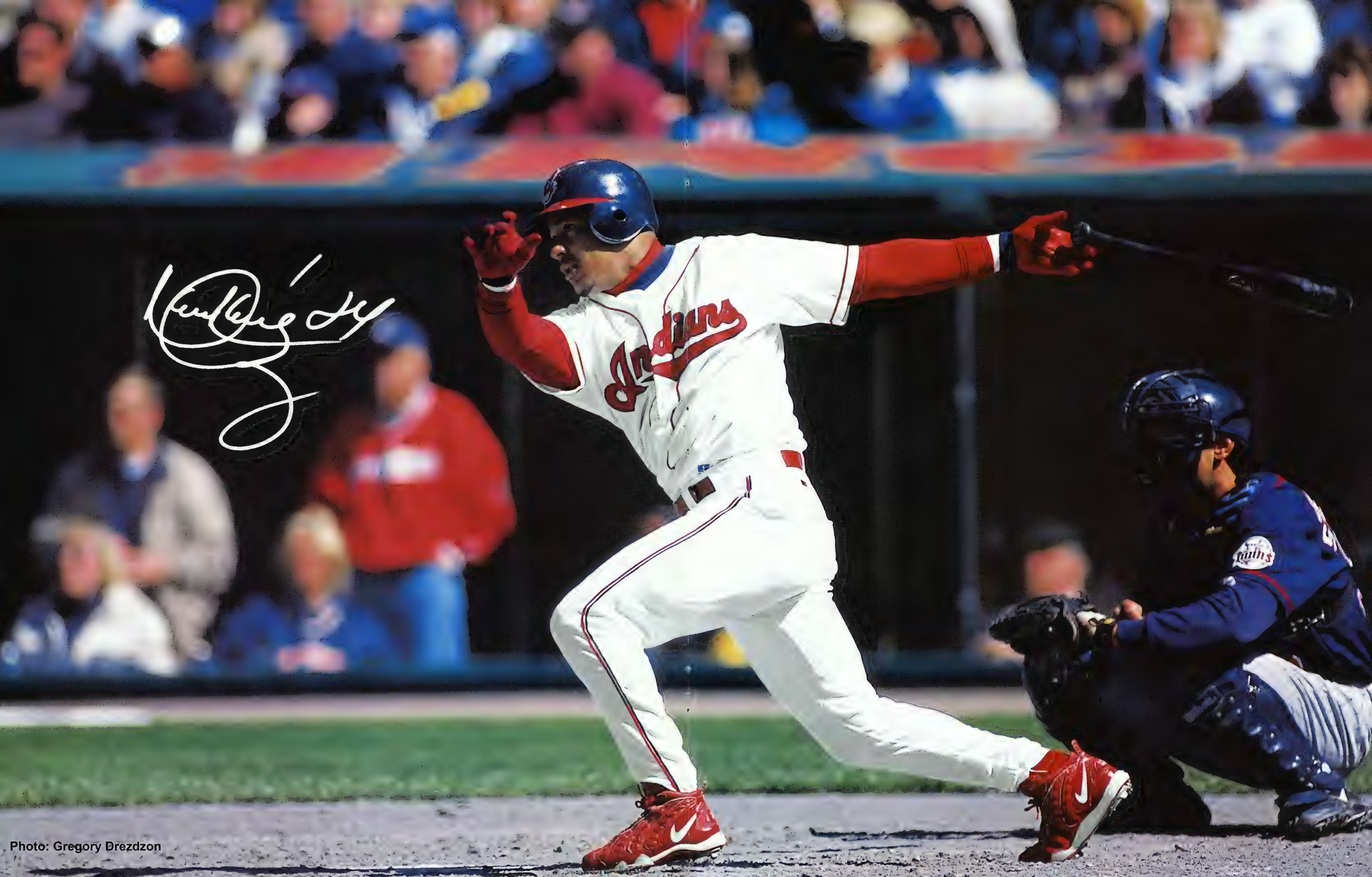
"Half the time you don't even know he's here," says Burba. "Manny likes to joke around some, but he's not very boisterous. He doesn't talk a lot, but you can tell he likes being here."

In a quiet way, of course.



Photo: Gregory Drezdson





Paul G. 14

Photo: Gregory Drezdzon

How To Score A Game

Baseball fans can enjoy the sport to the fullest extent by keeping track of the game and pinpointing those big plays that bring victory or defeat. All you need is a basic knowledge of the rules.

Although there are countless scoring methods, experts use a simple code based on numbering players by position and tracing action through the use of symbols. It's easy and fun.

In fact, why not devise your own scoring system with the basic suggestions on this page.

One such suggestion on player substitutions is to use a heavy or wavy line under or over a box to indicate a change, either of a player or batter.

If a batter flies to the rightfielder, merely use the figure 9. If it is a foul fly, use 9F.

Now that you are an official "scorer," you can really enjoy baseball games.

TEAM	Pos.	1	2
Rightfielder	9	4-6 W	
2nd Baseman	4	3 ④FO	
1st Baseman	3	==	
Centerfielder	8	SF 8	
Designated Hitter	DH	K	
Leftfielder	7		4-6
Catcher	2		DP 4-6-3
3rd Baseman	5		≡≡≡
Shortstop	6		7
Pitcher	1		
TOTALS	R/H	1 1	1 2

Walked and was forced out at second (second baseman to shortstop)

Reached first on fielder's choice when runner was forced out; advanced to third on a double by 3rd place hitter; scored on 4th place hitter's sacrifice fly.

Doubled; did not advance further.

Flew out to center field scoring runner on third.

Struck out — end of the inning.

Singled; later forced out at second (second baseman to shortstop in first half of double play).

Hit into double play (second baseman to shortstop to first baseman).

Hit home run.

Flew out to leftfielder — end of inning.

Use Symbols As Shorthand...

- Single —
- Double ≡
- Triple ≡≡
- Home Run ≡≡≡
- Error E
- Foul Fly F
- Double Play DP
- Fielder's Choice FC
- Hit by Pitcher HP
- Wild Pitch WP
- Stolen Base SB
- Sacrifice Hit SH
- Sacrifice Fly SF
- Caught Stealing CS
- Passed Ball PB
- Balk BK
- Struck Out K
- Base on Balls BB
- Forced Out FO
- Intentional Walk IW

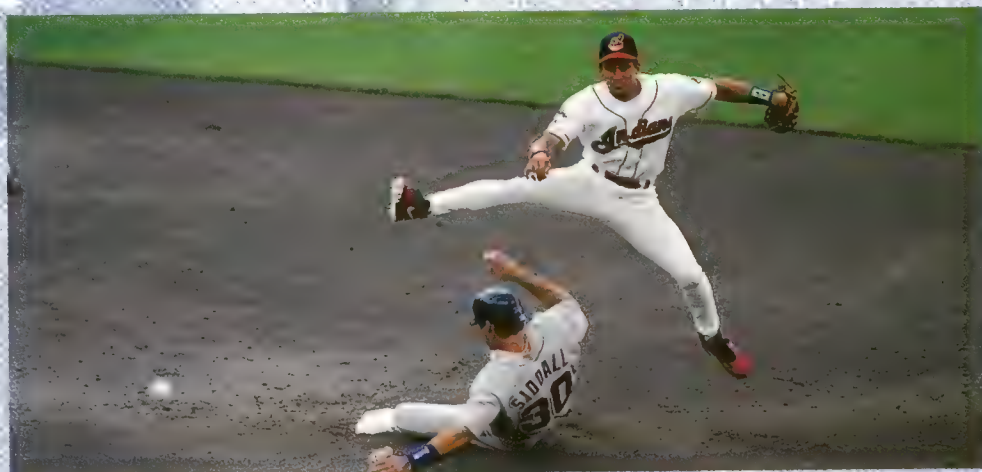


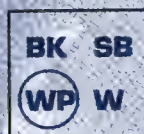
Photo: Gregory Drezdron

Can You Score The Play Above?

The ball was hit to the second baseman, who threw it to the shortstop. The shortstop was able to force out the runner who had been at first. He then threw the ball to the first baseman to get the batter out, turning a double play.

Can You Read This Scoring Example?

The hitter reached first base on a walk, stole second, advanced to third on a pitcher's balk, and scored on a wild pitch.





Minor League Memories

by Jim Ingraham

The money is in the Major Leagues. But the memories are in the Minor Leagues.

You don't get to the money without the memories.

And this is good.

Ballplayers love talking about the bad old days, because once you make it to the Major Leagues the bad old days become the good old days.

And make no mistake about it, those were the days. . .

"I remember playing with **Jose Canseco**, in 1985 at Huntsville, Ala.," said Tribe first base coach **Brian Graham**. "He could stand at home plate and throw the ball over the outfield wall in left, center, or right, on the fly. It was unbelievable."

Former Tribe pitcher **Tom Candiotti** never hesitates when asked his most vivid Minor League memory. "My first year, in 1979 at Victoria (British Columbia, Canada), **Bill Murray**, the comedian, was our first base coach for the last week of the season," said Candiotti. "It was the wildest week I've ever had in baseball."

See?

You want memories? These guys have them.

"My very first day in professional baseball, in Pocatello, Idaho, the whole team spent the first two hours picking rocks off the infield," said Tribe reliever **Steve Reed**. "Two hours! That tells you what kind of field they had there."

For most Major League players, the Minor Leagues, were, in essence, their first job. Good or bad — usually the latter — everybody remembers their first job.

"I showed up in Victoria my first year carrying a fishing pole, a

sleeping bag, and my golf clubs. That was it," said Candiotti. "I had nothing."

A few years later Candiotti had worked his way up to the Texas League, a league infamous for its long bus rides. "We used to judge the length of a road trip by how many McDonald's stops there were," said Candiotti. "I played in El Paso, and our farthest trip was to Jackson, Miss. That was a 20-hour bus ride, but we looked at it as a three McDonald's stop trip."

The good news for Candiotti was that his salary had risen from \$500 per month at Victoria to \$900 per month at El Paso.

"That meant I could get three Big Mac's instead of just three hamburgers on the trip to Jackson," he said with a laugh.

Most Major League players can look back and chuckle now. They made it. They beat the astronomical odds stacked against most Minor League players. The vast majority of players in the Minor Leagues never even get a whiff of the big leagues.

There are four levels of Minor Leagues that players must climb to make it to the Majors: rookie ball, Class A, Class AA, and Class AAA. At best, only one or two players on most rookie ball teams will ever make it to the Major Leagues.

"Realistically, when you're down there, you know that few players ever make it to the big leagues," said Tribe pitcher **Paul Assenmacher**.

"I don't think most Minor League players have any idea what the odds are for them making it to the big leagues," said Reed. "Maybe the college guys have a little better idea. But the kids right out of high school, they don't realize the scope of what they're facing."



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

Above, Indians first base coach, Brian Graham, contemplates his days in the Minors.

"They are only aware of what's going on in their little environment. They don't realize the number of guys out there in all the Minor Leagues trying to do the same thing they are doing.

"The other thing is, that most of the kids down there have been the best players on their Little League teams, the best players on their high school teams, the best players on every team they've ever played on. But once you get in professional baseball, every guy out there was the best guy on his high school team."

Some of them are even better than that. Some are the best players in the country.

Like **Paul Shuey**.

In 1992 Shuey, a reliever at the University of North Carolina, was considered one of the top players in the country. He was selected by the Indians with the second pick of the first round of the June Amateur Draft.

"I signed for \$650,000, which was big money back then," said Shuey. "So I knew with the kind of money

Unlike Shuey, who was a high profile, big-name player taken in the first round of the June Draft, Candiotti, Assenmacher, and Reed, were all college pitchers who didn't get drafted at all.

In July of 1979, Candiotti signed as an undrafted free agent with the Victoria Mussels, an independent Minor League team that had no Major League affiliation. Assenmacher signed with the Braves as an undrafted free agent in July of 1983. Reed signed with the Giants as an undrafted free agent in June of 1988.



Photos: Gregory Drezdson, both

"I had a pretty good college career (at St. Mary's College in northern California, good enough to be elected to the school's Hall of Fame), but I wasn't a radar-gun-guy," Candiotti said. "I didn't throw real hard. To get drafted you need to be a radar-gun-guy."

One of Candiotti's college teammates had gotten a job with the Victoria team in the Northwest League. He suggested that Candiotti try to do the same.

"So I drove up to Vancouver and

asked for a tryout," Candiotti said. "They signed me for \$500 a month, Canadian. We were given \$5 per day meal money."

Busses? Candiotti would have killed for a bus ride that year. "We rode around in two vans," he said. "That's how we traveled. I don't even know how many guys we had on our roster. Guys were always coming and going. I was oblivious to most of the roster moves. We

While some players — like former Tribe pitcher Tom Candiotti (left) — were undrafted, paid little, and unsure of their future, a chosen few — like Indians reliever Paul Shuey (right) — were drafted early, paid well, and were more confident of their chances.

they had invested in me, that I would get a fair shot to make it, and to tell you the truth, I never really had any doubt in my mind that I would make it to the Major Leagues. But for low round draft picks, they need to put up the numbers every year, because the front office can't spend a lot of time looking at them."

Assenmacher, Reed, and Candiotti are three good examples of that.

didn't even have a trainer. If something was wrong with you, you went to a health club by yourself and got some ice, or some tape to tape yourself up with."

The Victoria ballpark was also unique in that it was located on an island. "We used to have to take a ferry to the ballpark," Candiotti said.

"The biggest thing I learned from being in the Minor Leagues was how to deal with failure."

— Tribe reliever Paul Shuey

It was, in every way imaginable, rock bottom for a professional baseball player. Candiotti is the only player from the Victoria roster that year that made it to the big leagues.

But there was one other person in a Victoria uniform that year that made it.

Bill Murray.

"One of the owners of our club was a guy named Van Schley, who was one of the producers of *'Saturday Night Live'*, which was really big back then," said Candiotti. "Bill Murray was on the show then, and I don't know how it happened, but at the end of the season he came out and was our first base coach for the last week."

Needless to say, Murray wasn't exactly Mr. Baseball.

"I remember the first day he joined our team there were a lot of reporters there to do a story about it," said Candiotti. "So Bill got them all together and said, 'Look, I'll be happy to talk to all of you, but I got to do something first. Why don't you all come in here?' So he got a bunch of folding chairs and set them up in the shower room. And

he got all the reporters to sit on the chairs. Then he went into the next room and turned on all the showers. It was hysterical."

The antics continued for most of the week.

"Bill was our first base coach," Candiotti said. "Every game. He'd stand out there and make fun of the other team's pitcher and players. The fans loved it. At the end of the week we were playing Walla Walla, a team that had a chance to win the championship.

"There was a close play at the plate, and the umpire called the Walla Walla guy out. Their manager went nuts. He came out and argued, and the umpire threw him out of the game. Well the clubhouse was in the right field corner, so the manager had to walk out there, and past Bill Murray, on his way to the clubhouse.

"As the manager gets close to Murray, Bill gets down on all fours and starts barking like a dog. Then he grabs the manager by the stirrup on his baseball sock, growling, and pulling on it. The crowd was going crazy, and this manager is really steamed! I laughed so hard I could hardly breathe. What a week that was. I still see Bill at golf tournaments now and then, and when I do I always call him 'coach.' He still talks about that week. It was a riot."

Murray's presence obviously helped the Victoria players forget about the fact that they were at the bottom of the baseball food chain. But Assenmacher says that thought is never very far from any Minor Leaguer's mind.

"After you're up in the big leagues for a while, it's easy to forget how

good this life is," said Assenmacher. "Then you think back to the struggles you had in the Minor Leagues, and it makes you appreciate being in the big leagues even more."

Assenmacher said there is an all-for-one, one-for-all mentality in the Minors. "You eat together, ride busses together, and chip in for apartments and food for one another," he said.

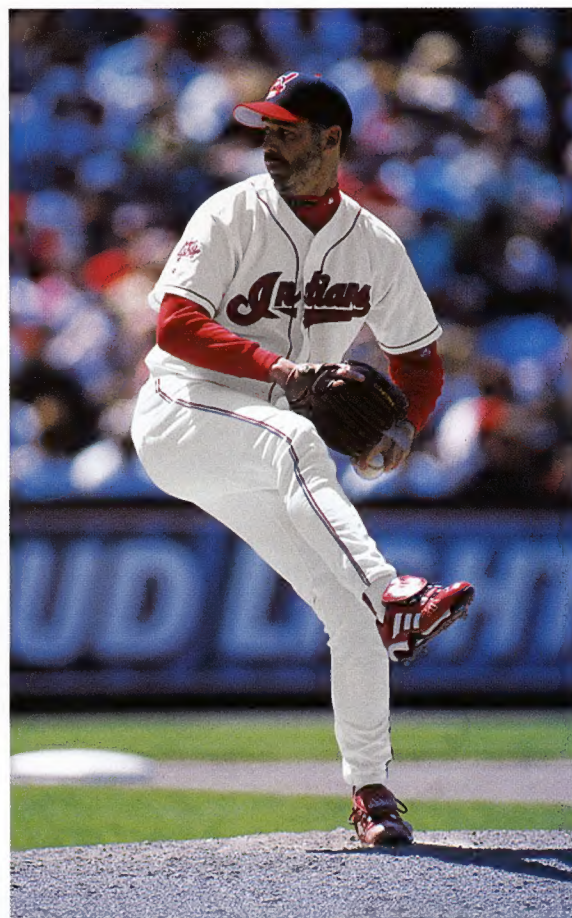


Photo: Gregory Drezdson

Back in his Single-A days, Indians pitcher Paul Assenmacher, pictured above, dreamed of making it to Triple-A.

The bus rides are the one constant all players mention when remembering their days in the Minors.

"I remember playing in Durham (NC) and taking a long bus ride to

continued, see Minor Leagues, page 88

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experience as a prison guard. He worked at the state prison in Angleton, Texas, a maximum security facility.

"I thank God for the opportunity," says Jackson. "First of all, it was a job. It was a way for me to make some money, but it was an opportunity to see what goes on in prison. After working there, I knew I didn't want to be in there."

Working in the prison was an enlightening experience.

"All your rights are basically gone," he says. "You don't wake up when you want to, you don't eat when you want to, and you don't go to bed when you want to. You don't have any freedom. I saw a lot of things you don't see on the outside. It's like a whole 'nother world. It was a blessing to see. Your life is in jeopardy every day you go in there. There are a lot of fights. You're in there with murderers.

You never know what's on an inmate's mind."

Jackson passed along his experiences to the kids. "I told them that could be their next step if they're not willing to change. I told them it will be a whole lot different if you go to the next level. I told them all their rights and freedom will be taken away."

After working in a prison, the pressure of trying to get a hitter out late in a game doesn't seem quite as overpowering.

"If you're working in a prison, your life is in jeopardy," Jackson says. "During a game you're throwing a baseball and people scream and yell at you if you don't get a guy out."

**Before the adrenaline rush...
relievers as *spectators*
in the bullpen.**

Jackson is one of the best when it comes to getting guys out. And he's made quite an impression with people off the field, too.



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

Did you ever wonder what it's like to be the voice of the Cleveland Indians?

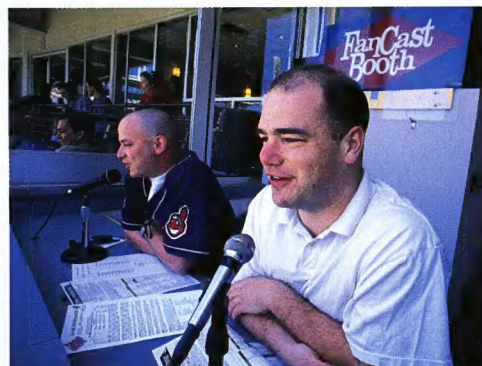
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Photos: Gregory Drezdson, both

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1999 Cleveland Indians



Photo: Gregory Drezdson